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ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of Triton College's (Illinois) New Faculty Orientation Plan, which was developed in light of the large number of retirements and new hires expected by the year 2000. The purpose of the plan is to assist newly hired instructors to move productively into their professional roles and to become actively involved in the campus community. Program goals include the improvement of teaching and professional service skills, the creation of a professional development plan, and active involvement in the campus community. Program components include new faculty mentoring, a monthly schedule of mentoring activities, the appointment of mentors, faculty portfolios, campus activities, special events, recognition, a Web page, and assessment of program components. An appendix provides a list of members of the academic senate's professional development committee. (MDM)

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NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION PLAN

Prepared by the Professional Development Committee

of the Academic Senate

Triton College

April 1999

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Purpose

In the fall term of 1998, there were 170 full-time faculty members employed at Triton College. Forty-eight of these instructors are scheduled to retire by the end of June 2000. Many will continue to teach a reduced load for a three-year period as professors emeritus or senior lecturers at the college. In its *Faculty Recruitment Action Plan* of August 1998, the college proposed to hire 32 new faculty members by the end of the year 2000 to replace the retirees. Additional faculty positions will be filled as needed.

If the faculty replacement plan is implemented as originally set forth, there will be a total of 154 full-time faculty in the fall of 2000 at the college, of whom 32 (21 percent) will have been hired after January of 1999. A significant change in the composition of the faculty, and the culture of the institution, may be expected.

The new faculty members will be younger, more diverse, and probably less familiar with the character of the college and the nature of their teaching responsibilities. The purpose of this *New Faculty Orientation Plan* is to assist newly hired instructors to move productively into their professional roles at Triton College and to become actively involved in the campus community. An indirect, but much-desired, effect of successful faculty adaptation to Triton would be increased student success at the college.

Plan Development

The *New Faculty Orientation Plan* has been drafted by the Professional Development Committee of the Academic Senate and implemented by the faculty and staff of Triton College. The timetable for the committee's planning process is shown below. The process is intended to provide for faculty direction of the orientation program, with the involvement and support of the college administration.

Activity / Event	**Spring 1999 Dates**
Develop a rough draft of an orientation plan	January 19
Professional Development Committee (PDC) reviews plan	February 4
Draft plan revised	Mid-February
PDC OK's draft to propose to Academic Senate	February 24
Draft plan presented to Senate	March 23
Open forum meeting on orientation plan	March 30
Revisions made to plan	March 31
PDC OK's revised plan to recommend to Senate	April 1
Senate recommends acceptance of the plan	April 13
Administration approves plan and sets program budget	Mid-April
Begin to implement plan	April-May

Needs Analysis

A body of literature exists that examines the needs and concerns of new and junior faculty members at colleges and universities in the United States. Mary Dean Sorcinelli (in her article "How Mentoring Programs Can Improve Teaching") identified the following aspects of teaching as most stressful for new faculty:

- Time constraints—especially difficulties in managing the range of new teaching responsibilities
- Lack of collegial support—including "feelings of loneliness, isolation, lack of social and intellectual stimulation, and insufficient support from senior faculty members"
- Inadequate feedback, recognition, and reward—especially relating to teaching and the criteria for evaluating teaching

Robert Boice gave a similar analysis of the needs of new faculty members. In his view, the problems of new faculty are to:

- Gain the acceptance of colleagues—overcome loneliness, intellectual understimulation, and cultural conflicts with senior faculty
- Establish teaching styles and skills—develop an acceptable level of comfort and student approval and move beyond defensive strategies
- Develop habits of writing productivity and establish themselves as contributing members of their professional fields

Boice emphasized the need for new faculty to become involved in campus life, to establish a balance between time devoted to teaching and to other professional activities,

to reflectively plan their work, and to establish social networks. He cited earlier research in support of his claim that "both productivity in scholarship and excellence in teaching profit from building on social networks." (Robert Boice, *The New Faculty Member*)

Early in February of 1999, a focus group discussion was held with seven recently hired faculty members at Triton. The following recommendations were derived from that discussion.

1. New faculty should have access to an office, a clean desk, and a functional computer and telephone on the first day of work.
2. More direction and clarification needs to be given about attendance policies, student discipline issues, and policies on children in classrooms.
3. Faculty evaluation procedures need to be clearly outlined early in the first semester, and the calendar for completing the process needs to be specified.
4. The tenure process needs to be explained, including the calendar of decision dates for renewal of contracts and granting of tenure.
5. More information about housing, schools, and child care options within the Triton district needs to be available for faculty members who move into the area.
6. Individual interviews with Human Resources representatives are needed to review and sign documents that enable instructors to get paid. Also, new faculty need to be told, with as much advance notice as possible, that they will need to pay for their health insurance for the first six months of their employment at Triton.
7. Tours of campus buildings and facilities should be made available during the fall and spring workshops or during the school year.

Goals and Outcomes

In responding to the needs identified above, this orientation plan presents a variety of ways for addressing three main goals. Personal assistance and campus resources will be provided to assist new faculty in:

1. Improving teaching and professional service skills
2. Creating a professional development plan
3. Becoming involved in the campus community

Goal 1: Improving Teaching and Professional Service Skills

A general outcome relating to this goal is that new faculty members will develop a personally satisfying style of teaching and service that is educationally productive for Triton's students. Specific outcomes would include high performance ratings from peers or department chairpersons, and similarly high ratings from students on evaluation instruments. Furthermore, the preparation of high quality syllabi, the development of new courses, the acquisition of new instructional methods, or the utilization of new instructional technologies would also provide evidence of progress on this goal.

The orientation program should be designed to assist new faculty members in developing their teaching or professional service abilities to a level that is sufficient for them to be retained from year to year and eventually granted tenure at the college.

Goal 2: Creating a Professional Development Plan

It is expected that improving teaching and service skills and earning tenure will be part of the professional goals of the new faculty. In addition, however, new faculty members could benefit from reflective analysis and discussion of directions for professional development in their fields. They may need assistance in organizing their schedules to steadily pursue such goals as completing degree programs, publishing articles or books, or delivering presentations at conferences, while also keeping up with their teaching responsibilities. A professional development plan should set realistic goals and lay out a reasonable approach to attaining them.

Goal 3: Becoming Actively Involved in the Campus Community

Desired outcomes for the third goal relate to the participation of new faculty members in the academic and social life of the college outside of the office, the classroom or office, and the department. Outcomes will include new faculty members eventually serving on college committees, sponsoring extra-curricular programs, participating in faculty association activities, attending various campus events, and developing acquaintances and friendships with other members of the Triton community. The college clearly stands to gain from the active involvement of its faculty leaders. This involvement may also be expected to provide desirable social experiences and opportunities for the new faculty members.

Program Components

The program outlined below is based upon the three main goals described above. It provides for the use of multiple resources of the college to be made available to new faculty members. The primary components of the program are the mentoring process and the faculty portfolio. Other campus activities and program events will be developed in response to faculty needs and interests that are identified through the mentoring process.

1. The Mentoring Process

New faculty who participate in the orientation program will be assigned to a more senior faculty mentor. The mentoring pairs will meet on a regular basis throughout the fall and spring semesters. One important task will be to develop a faculty service portfolio for the new instructor, counselor, advisor, or librarian. Along with this, the teams will attend various teaching skills courses, human resources workshops, committee meetings, and other social events. The faculty portfolio (described below) will contain plans, reflections, and documents relating to the three main goals of the orientation plan.

2. Monthly Schedule

Each month, the following activities will take place as part of the mentoring program. In the fall term, the schedule will be used for September, October, and November; in the spring, the schedule will continue with February, March, and April. Other special

mentoring program events will be planned around the faculty workshops, with a concluding celebration and review event to be held in May of the year.

Week 1	New faculty member meets with mentor to discuss development of the faculty portfolio.
Week 2	New faculty member attends campus program along with mentor, when possible.
Week 3	New faculty member meets with department chairperson/ coordinator to discuss progress of the mentoring program and steps involved in the faculty evaluation process.
Week 4	(a) New faculty member attends a group meeting with other new faculty to discuss mentoring program activities.
	(b) Mentors meet as a group to review progress and discuss the needs of the mentoring program.
	(c) Deans review the mentoring process with the department chairpersons/ coordinators

Estimated time commitments:

New faculty members:	8 hours per month
Mentors:	6 hours per month
Department chairs/coordinators:	2 hours per month

3. Appointment of Mentors

Mentors should be good coaches who can assist the new faculty in becoming good teachers. The senior faculty members, including counselors, advisors, and librarians, who are asked to serve as mentors should have the following characteristics:

- Strong reputation for excellent service as a teacher, counselor, advisor, or librarian
- Prior experience in mentoring adjunct faculty (preferable, not required)
- Teach in the same division (Arts and Sciences, Business, Technology, or Health Careers) as the new faculty member but in a different department. Mentors for newly hired counselors, advisors, or librarians will be appointed from other academic divisions of the college.
- Significant involvement in campus committees, Faculty Association, or other activities

When a new faculty member is hired, the area dean in consultation with department chairpersons or coordinators will appoint a full-time faculty member within the division to serve as the mentor for the new instructor. Interested faculty members may wish to notify their area dean of their desire to serve as a mentor.

4. Faculty Portfolios

A faculty portfolio is a collection of materials that document a faculty member's goals and objectives, strengths, accomplishments, and teaching or professional service

effectiveness. In his book *Successful Use of Teaching Portfolios*, Peter Seldin gives the following list of items that are frequently included in teaching portfolios (pp. 6-7):

Materials from Oneself

- Statement of teaching responsibilities, including course titles, numbers, enrollments, and a brief description of the way each course was taught.
- Representative course syllabi detailing course content and objectives, teaching methods, readings, homework assignments.
- Description of steps taken to improve teaching, including changes resulting from self-evaluation, reading journals on teaching improvement, participation in programs on sharpening instructional skill.
- Instructional innovations and evaluation of their effectiveness.
- A personal statement by the professor describing teaching goals for the next five years.

Material from Others

- Student course or teaching evaluation data which produce an overall rating of effectiveness or suggest improvements.
- Statements from colleagues who have observed the professor in the classroom.
- Documentation of teaching development activity through the campus center for teaching and learning.
- Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the professor's teaching materials, such as course syllabi, assignments, testing and grading practices.
- Honors or other recognition such as distinguished teaching awards.

Products of Good Teaching

- A record of students who succeed in advanced study in the field.
- Student publications or conference presentations on course-related work.
- Testimonials from employers or students about the professors' influence on career choice.
- Student scores of pre- and post-course examinations.

What goes into a faculty portfolio is determined by its purposes. In this new faculty orientation plan, the faculty portfolio is proposed for the purposes of encouraging teaching or professional service improvement, professional development, and campus involvement. The portfolio will belong solely to the new faculty member and is intended only for his or her use.

According to Seldin, experience shows that teaching portfolios are best prepared in consultation with colleagues. Mentors can provide guidance and support to faculty members who are assembling their materials. They can raise questions, suggest alternatives, or point out topics for further discussion. The cooperative development of a portfolio can promote collegial exchanges about teaching or professional service and provide concrete, meaningful feedback to faculty members.

The portfolio developed by the new faculty member and mentor could be organized in three main sections, each relating to one of the program goals. During the first semester, the new faculty member and mentor should aim at developing the scope of the portfolio in its entirety. During the second semester, revisions and additions can be made. The new faculty member may wish to focus more on specific projects, based upon a review of his or her portfolio at the outset of the second semester.

5. Campus Activities

In addition to developing faculty portfolios, the mentoring pairs will attend or participate in other campus activities relating to the new faculty members' portfolio goals throughout the two semesters. These may include:

- Workshops (e.g., by Human Resources staff)
- Teaching skills courses
- Training/Technology courses
- Seminars (e.g., on professional development strategies)
- Brown bag lunches (social opportunities)
- College committee meetings
- Faculty Association meetings
- Workshops for mentors (e.g., on faculty portfolios)

While some of the campus activities will be designed for new faculty members or mentors only, most of them will be open to all faculty or even all staff. A special series of professional development workshops can be created to provide all faculty members with programs and guidance on teaching strategies, student discipline issues, and other classroom management topics.

6. Special Events

August, before Faculty Workshop:	Orientation meeting for new faculty (and mentors?)
Early December	Celebration and review event
During January Faculty Workshop	A 60- or 90 minute orientation meeting on the spring mentoring program
Early May	Celebration and review event

7. Recognition

A well-thought-out recognition program can be beneficial in building faculty commitment to the institution and in retaining exceptional new faculty members. Robert Boice, citing research by Neuman and Finlay-Neuman, said:

> *Commitment means that workers accept organizational values and goals, exert themselves on behalf of the organization, and express a desire to maintain their membership in the organization. Its benefits include heightened job performance and organizational effectiveness.... Neuman and Finlay-Neuman also use their analyses to suggest what campuses can do to build commitment: provide clear equity criteria for faculty rewards and provide support by a friendly group of colleagues and/or chairperson.*

At the end of the school year, new faculty members and their mentors will receive certificates of recognition for completing the mentoring program. These can be presented at the May dinner event. Other forms of recognition could be considered as well. Awards could be given for the top three professional development projects done under the mentoring program: honoraria would be nice, or perhaps software of the recipient's choice. Specific plans for suitable forms of recognizing the achievements of new faculty and mentors should be developed in detail.

8. Web Page

A Web page will be developed for the new faculty orientation program. It will present information on topics of interest to the new faculty, mentors, and other members of the campus community. Some of the items to be included will be:

- the new faculty orientation plan
- a calendar of events scheduled for the program

- examples of portfolio elements
- Human Resources information
- discussions of topics of interest
- lists of campus committees, with brief descriptions of the functions and references to contact persons for each committee
- links to professional development pages

9. Assessment

Each component of the new faculty orientation program will have an appropriate assessment instrument. This practice will allow planners and coordinators to revise elements of the program in response to needs and interests expressed by the participants.

a) **Mentoring/faculty portfolios** At the end of each semester, new faculty members, mentors, department chairpersons/coordinators, and deans will be asked to complete a short evaluation of the mentoring and portfolio development process.

b) **Campus activities** Assessment instruments will be developed for each of the more formal campus presentations that are done for the new faculty members: i.e., Human Resources workshops, teaching skills courses, Training/Technology courses.

c) **Special events** All participants in the orientation meetings at the beginning of each semester will be asked to complete an assessment instrument about these programs.

d) **Web page** Evaluation forms can be built into the web page, and a question about it can be included in the assessment instrument at the end of each semester.

The complete file of all assessment documents will be kept in the Office of Research, Planning and Assessment. Copies of the assessment documents will be made available to program planners on a periodic basis. An annual report summarizing the activities, events, and products of the new faculty orientation program will be prepared by the research office staff and sent to program planners and other campus leaders prior to the beginning of the budget planning cycle for the next fiscal year.

Program Coordination and Budget

Program Coordination

The main activities of the program will be conducted by the new faculty members and their mentors. Department chairpersons/coordinators and area deans should check to see that the required meetings and activities are taking place and that things are going relatively smoothly and productively.

The monthly group meetings, first of the new faculty participants and secondly of the mentors, should provide additional assistance in overcoming any roadblocks encountered by the mentoring pairs. These meetings may be chaired by members of the Academic Senate's Professional Development Committee.

Coordination will be needed for the following program functions:

- development and maintenance of the annual program calendar, including the Human Resources workshops, courses, and special events
- management of each of the special events in the program
- creation and maintenance of the program's Web page
- administration and collection of the assessment instruments

Budget

Staff

1. New faculty participants	$200
2. Mentors	$200 per semester

Special Events

1. Fall orientation day event
2. December dinner event
3. January orientation program
4. May dinner event

Estimated total for FY 1999 special events: $8,000

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